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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8614
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION PRIORITY 6338
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 6203
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1340
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 1870
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 6571
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 0568
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0081
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 001327

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WHA FOR A/S SHANNON, DASDUDDY, AND DMCCARTHY, WHA/BSC FOR FRIEDMAN, AND BLAKENEY NEA/IR FOR HWOOSTER, S/CT FOR VIRGINIA PALMER AND ARNOLD SIERRA, NSC FOR JUAN ZARATE AND JOSE CARDENAS, FBI FOR CTD IRAN-HIZBALLAH UNIT AND OIO AMERICAS UNIT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/10/2017
TAGS: PTER PREL PGOV KJUS AR FBI IS
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETING WITH AMIA FRIENDS AND FAMILY GROUP

Classified By: Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for reasons 1.4(b)and(d)

¶1. (C) Summary. On July 10, Ambassador Wayne, accompanied by Legal Attache and poloff, met with representatives from the Friends and Families of victims of the 1994 Argentine Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA) terrorist attack (FAV). The Ambassador praised the FAV's efforts to keep the memory of the AMIA attack and the 1992 attack on the Israeli Embassy alive. He expressed support for their and the Argentine government's efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice and assured FAV representatives that the USG continues to support GOA efforts to lobby Interpol members to uphold Interpol's Executive Committee (EC) recommendation to issue six international arrest warrants (Red Notices) for suspects implicated in the AMIA attack. FAV representatives thanked the USG for its support, and offered their perspective on additional leads the GOA should have pursued in the AMIA investigation. They also expressed concern over Iran's "aggressive" diplomatic effort to lobby Interpol members to overturn the EC decision. They asked that the USG continue to keep pressure on Interpol members to vote in favor of upholding the EC decision. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On July 10, Ambassador Wayne, accompanied by Legal Attache and poloff, met with representatives from the Friends and Families of victims of the 1994 Argentine Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA) terrorist attack (FAV). The Ambassador praised the FAV's perseverance in pursuing justice in the AMIA attack and the 1992 attack on the Israeli Embassy and for keeping the memory of the victims alive. He expressed support for their and the GOA's efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice. FAV representative, Luis Czyzewski, thanked the USG for its support, and asked that the USG lobby Interpol members prior to the November General Assembly urging them to vote in favor of upholding Interpol's Executive Committee (EC) recommendation to issue six international arrest warrants (Red Notices) for suspects implicated in the AMIA attack. He noted that although Interpol's General Assembly has never overturned a unanimous

EC decision before, the FAV remains concerned over Iran's "aggressive" diplomatic effort to lobby Interpol members to overturn the decision. The Ambassador stated that the USG stands ready to assist GOA efforts to lobby Interpol members to uphold the EC decision. He further explained that the GOA should take the lead in lobbying Interpol with the USG playing a supporting role in order to avoid criticism that the effort is USG-led.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador praised AMIA Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman's handling of the AMIA investigation and asked for FAV's observations on how the previous investigation was mishandled. Czyzewski opined that the Swiss government did not cooperate with Argentine authorities investigating whether the Iranian government (GOI) used a Swiss bank account to finance the terrorist attack. LEGATT deemed the possibility as unlikely, pointing out that Iran has a sophisticated intelligence service, and would not likely use a financing mechanism that is so easily traceable. Czyzewski noted that both the French and German governments had made similar allegations that Iran financed terrorist activities in their countries using a Swiss bank account. He noted that the U.S. has a counterterrorism finance information sharing agreement with Switzerland and asked whether or not the USG could try to obtain information about the existence of such an account under the agreement. LEGATT explained that the agreement is bilateral in nature, and that the USG can not ask for information on behalf of a third country. The Ambassador noted that if the FAV had any additional concrete information about the account, such as an account number or bank name, the USG would be interested in pursuing the lead, because it is an account that has allegedly been used to finance a number of terrorist activities. FAV said it did not have any additional information as the Swiss government

could not identify the account, and suggested contacting AMIA Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman for additional information. LEGATT agreed to do so.

¶4. (C) Ambassador praised Nisman's efforts to investigate the AMIA bombing, and asked for FAV's opinion on how the case was handled in the first investigation under Judge Galeano. Czyzewski acknowledged that Nisman had conducted a good investigation with USG assistance. He stated that Galeano, on the other hand, was neither personally nor technically prepared to investigate the AMIA bombing and committed many mistakes. While he indicated that it is not clear whether the Menem administration pressured Galeano to take certain actions, he opined that it was more than likely. He noted that there was also a lot of inter-agency fighting that complicated the investigation. He further explained that Galeano's decision to pay a witness for testimony is actually permitted under Argentine law, so long as the payment is drawn from a specific fund and noted in the case file. Unfortunately, Galeano kept the payment secret, Czyzewski stated.

¶5. (C) Another FAV representative stated that FAV has asked Nisman to summon a Menem-era official (and Menem's ex-brother-in-law), Amir Yoma (alternative spelling: Amir Yoma), to look into the supposed suicide of his office secretary, Lourdes Di Natale, who reportedly knew about the

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government's efforts to investigate the case and whose father believes she was murdered. Another possible suspect is Syrian national, and alleged arms dealer, Monzer Al Kazar (alternative spelling: Al Kassar), who was able to obtain an Argentine passport during the Menem era. Legatt discounted a possible Syrian connection to the AMIA bombing, noting that Hezbollah agents who carried out the attack, are financed by Iran, not Syria. The Ambassador acknowledged that individual Syrians may have facilitated the operations, but that it was less likely that Syria or the Syrian-Argentine community was involved in the attack. (Note: Al Kazar was arrested in Spain in June in response to a USG extradition request.)

¶6. (C) The Ambassador then asked why there had not been any

progress on the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy. Czyzewski opined that the GOA made a political decision not to investigate the attack, as it considers the attack to be one on Israel not on Argentina. Upon conclusion of the meeting, Czyzewski invited the Ambassador to participate in a ceremony on July 18 to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the bombing. The Ambassador noted that he had planned to attend the annual commemoration.

WAYNE